

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. AUSTRALIA'S MAN IN HANOI VIEWS US VISIT

AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR TO HANOI JOHN BROOK TOLD EMBASSY BANGKOK THAT NO ONE IN HANOI KNOWS WHAT THE VIETNAMESE ARE PREPARED TO OFFER THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION, BUT HE BELIEVES THEY WILL CONDITION PROGRESS ON THE MIA ISSUES TO US WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. HE CONFIRMED THAT VICE FOREIGN MINISTER PHAN HIEN CONTINUES TO

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OVERSEE US/VIETNAM RELATIONS AND WILL MOST LIKELY BE THE MAJOR CONTACT OF THE COMMISSION. IF PRIME MINISTER PHAM VAN DONG EVER STEPS INTO THE PROCEEDINGS, IT WOULD BE A "VERY GOOD SIGN." AMBASSADOR BROOK ALSO NOTED THAT:

--CONDITIONS IN THE SOUTH REMAIN SO DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN THE NORTH THAT SEPARATE ADMINISTRATION AND

POLICIES WILL BE REQUIRED FOR YEARS TO COME.

--VIETNAM'S FOOD SHORTAGE, EXACERBATED BY DROUGHT AND INCLEMENT WEATHER, WILL PERSIST UNTIL SOMETIME IN 1978.

EMBASSY COMMENT: BROOK IS AN EXPERIENCED AND RESPECTED DIPLOMAT. WHILE FREELY ADMITTING THAT HE IS AS ILL-INFORMED AS ALL WESTERNERS IN RESTRICTED HANOI, HE PROVIDES WELL-FORMULATED VIEWS FOR WHICH WE MUST ASSUME HE HAS A REASONABLE BASIS. (CONFIDENTIAL) BANGKOK 5468, 3/14.)

2. TURKISH PLANS RAISE GREEK HACKLES

EMBASSY ATHENS REPORTS THAT TURKEY'S PLAN TO CONDUCT COMBINED AIR-SEA MILITARY EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN MARCH 21-27 HAS SPARKED SHARP REACTION IN GREECE. ALTHOUGH THE NEWS WAS TREATED SOBERLY BY THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED TV AND RADIO, IT WAS CHARACTERISTICALLY SENSATIONALIZED BY THE LOCAL PRESS. THE FORTHCOMING EXERCISES WERE ALSO SHARPLY CRITICIZED BY LEADERS OF THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION, WHO TERMED THEM VIOLATIONS OF THE BERN AGREEMENT AND THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT AND DEMANDED AN IMMEDIATE END TO ONGOING BILATERAL TALKS ON AEGEAN ISSUES.

EMBASSY COMMENT: THE GREEK GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES TURKEY'S RIGHT TO CONDUCT SUCH MANEUVERS IN AND OVER INTERNATIONAL WATERS, BUT IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE SCOPE AND DURATION OF THE EXERCISES, AND THE USE OF LIVE AMMUNITION. ACCORDING
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TO THE MFA'S ACTING DIRECTOR OF TURKISH-CYPRIOT AFFAIRS, THE GREEK AMBASSADOR IN ANKARA RAISED THESE CONCERNS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CAGLAYANGIL, BUT THE TURKS DECLINED TO MODIFY THEIR PLANS. (CONFIDENTIAL) ATHENS 2312, 3/14.)

3. ZAIRE: DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES

AMBASSADOR CUTLER REPORTS FROM KINSHASA THAT PRESIDENT MOBUTU HAS ORDERED AN INCREASED DIPLOMATIC EFFORT REGARDING THE SHABA ATTACK. A ROVING AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN DISPATCHED TO A NUMBER OF AFRICAN STATES TO:

--REVIEW ZAIRE'S RECORD OF UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH ANGOLA; AND

--CONSULT ON MEANS OF MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF SOVIET/CUBAN STRATEGY IN VARIOUS PARTS OF AFRICA.

AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT: MOBUTU NOW CLEARLY UNDERSTANDS THE

IMPORTANCE WE PLACE ON DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS IN AFRICA. FOREIGN MINISTER NGUZA DOES NOT FAVOR MAKING A FORMAL APPEAL TO THE OAU FOR AN INVESTIGATION OF THE BORDER ATTACK BECAUSE OF THE LIKELIHOOD THAT RADICAL MEMBERS WOULD EITHER OPPOSE THE REQUEST OR FIND WAYS OF TURNING IT TO ANGOLA'S ADVANTAGE. NOR DOES HE BELIEVE ZAIRE SHOULD GO

BEYOND REPORTING THE ATTACK TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL SINCE IT WOULD BE WORSE TO SEEK AND FAIL TO GET POSITIVE COUNCIL ACTION THAN NOT TO TRY AT ALL. (CONFIDENTIAL)
KINSHASA 2260, 3/14.)

4. AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW OF THE POLISARIO

A JOURNALIST WHO SPENT A RELATIVELY UNRESTRICTED WEEK WITH THE POLISARIO IN SOUTHWESTERN ALGERIA AND THE SAHARA GAVE EMBASSY ALGIERS THE FOLLOWING VIEWS:
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--THE REFUGEE POPULATION OF POLISARIO CAMPS APPEARS TO BE CLOSE TO THE 80,000 CITED BY UN OBSERVERS, AND THE NUMBER IS GROWING.

--MOROCCAN ATROCITIES AFTER THE SPANISH WITHDRAWAL HELPED FORGE A NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS, AND THE SAHARANS WILL NOT ACCEPT ABSORPTION BY MOROCCO.

--POLISARIO LEADERS, WHO STAUNCHLY CLAIM INDEPENDENCE FROM ALGERIAN MACHINATIONS, WANT THE WEST TO KNOW THEIR MOVEMENT IS NOT RADICAL LEFTIST, AS THE MOROCCANS CLAIM, BUT INCLUDES ALL SHADES OF SAHARAN OPINION

EMBASSY COMMENT: THE JOURNALIST, WHO HAS MANY TRUSTED MOROCCAN CONTACTS AND WENT TO THE SAHARA IN A HIGHLY SKEPTICAL FRAME OF MIND, HAS NOW COME TO SEE THAT THE MOROCCAN POSITION IS UNSOUND. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) ALGIERS 668, 3/14.)
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MIA, MORNING SUMMARY
Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 15-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE057092
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O: SMITH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770088-0514
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770358/aaaabyrg.tel
Line Count: 159
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3f19f8b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SSO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3102206
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS
TAGS: PFOR, EAID, PLOS, PINS, AS, VS, VN, US, TU, GR, CG, AO, SS, POLISARIO, (BROOK, JOHN)
To: NSA JCS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbcr://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3f19f8b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009